

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application. Please cancel claims 42, 44, 46, 51-53, 55, 58-66, 69, and 71-78 without prejudice or disclaimer, amend claims 39, 41, 45, 47, 56, 57, and 68, and add new claims 79-109, as follows:

1-38 (Cancelled).

39. (Currently Amended) A method of grinding an inorganic particulate material in an aqueous suspension, said aqueous suspension comprising a sub-effective amount of at least one dispersant for the inorganic particulate material, wherein the aqueous suspension comprises up to 0.19% by weight of the at least one dispersant, based on the dry weight of the inorganic particulate material.

40. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 39, wherein the inorganic particulate material comprises calcium carbonate.

41. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 39, wherein the inorganic particulate material comprises kaolin ~~hydrous kaolinite clays~~.

42. (Cancelled)

43. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 39, wherein the aqueous suspension comprises up to about 50% by weight of the inorganic particulate material.

44. (Cancelled)

45. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 39 [[44]], wherein the aqueous suspension comprises up to about 0.15% by weight of the at least one dispersant, based on the dry weight of the inorganic particulate material.

46. (Cancelled)

47. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 45 [[46]], wherein the aqueous suspension comprises up to about 0.05% by weight of the at least one dispersant, based on the dry weight of the inorganic particulate material.

48. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 39, wherein the at least one dispersant is chosen from polyacrylates.

49. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 39, wherein the at least one dispersant is chosen from polymetaphosphates.

50. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 49, wherein the polymetaphosphate is chosen from sodium hexametaphosphate and tetrasodium metaphosphate.

51-53. (Cancelled)

54. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 39, wherein, after grinding, the inorganic particulate material has a steepness factor above about 35.

55. (Cancelled)

56. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 54 ~~[[55]]~~, wherein, after grinding, the inorganic particulate material has a steepness factor above about 45.

57. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 39, wherein, after grinding, the inorganic particulate ~~material matter~~ has an increased steepness, as compared to the steepness of the inorganic particulate material before grinding.

58-67. (Cancelled)

68. (Currently Amended) An aqueous suspension of at least one ground inorganic particulate material comprising a sub-effective amount of ~~[[a]]~~ at least one dispersant for the at least one inorganic particulate material, prepared by a method of

grinding at least one inorganic particulate material in an aqueous suspension, wherein said aqueous suspension comprises a sub-effective amount of at least one dispersant for the at least one inorganic particulate material, and wherein the aqueous suspension comprises up to 0.19% by weight of the at least one dispersant, based on the dry weight of the inorganic particulate material.

69-78. (Cancelled)

79. (New) The method of claim 39, wherein presence of the sub-effective amount of the at least one dispersant during grinding inhibits corrosion.

80. (New) A method of grinding an inorganic particulate material in an aqueous suspension, said aqueous suspension comprising a sub-effective amount of at least one dispersant for the inorganic particulate material, wherein said aqueous suspension comprises the inorganic particulate material at a solids level up to about 50% by weight, based on the total weight of the suspension.

81. (New) The method according to claim 80, wherein the inorganic particulate material comprises calcium carbonate.

82. (New) The method according to claim 80, wherein the inorganic particulate material comprises kaolin.

83. (New) The method according to claim 80, wherein the aqueous suspension comprises up to 0.19% by weight of the at least one dispersant, based on the dry weight of the inorganic particulate material.

84. (New) The method according to claim 83, wherein said aqueous suspension comprises the inorganic particulate material at a solids level from about 20% to about 30% by weight, based on the total weight of the suspension.

85. (New) The method according to claim 80, wherein the at least one dispersant is chosen from polyacrylates.

86. (New) The method according to claim 80, wherein the at least one dispersant is chosen from polymetaphosphates.

87. (New) The method according to claim 86, wherein the polymetaphosphate is chosen from sodium hexametaphosphate and tetrasodium metaphosphate.

88. (New) The method according to claim 80, wherein, after grinding, the inorganic particulate material has a steepness factor above about 35.

89. (New) The method according to claim 88, wherein, after grinding, the inorganic particulate material has a steepness factor above about 45.

90. (New) The method according to claim 80, wherein, after grinding, the inorganic particulate material has an increased steepness, as compared to the steepness of the inorganic particulate material before grinding.

91. (New) The method according to claim 80, wherein presence of the sub-effective amount of the at least one dispersant during grinding inhibits corrosion.

92. (New) The method according to claim 80, wherein the resultant ground inorganic particulate material is added to:

- a paper or paper pulp to provide a coating or filler therefore, and/or
- a composition which is subsequently processed to obtain a paper.

93. (New) The method according to claim 80, wherein the resultant ground inorganic particulate material is added to:

- a polymer or rubber, and/or
- to a composition which is subsequently processed to obtain a polymer or rubber.

94. (New) The method according to claim 93, wherein the resultant polymer is formed into a film.

95. (New) The method according to claim 80, wherein the resultant ground inorganic particulate material is added to:

- a paint, and/or

- a composition which is subsequently processed to obtain a paint.

96. (New) The method according to claim 80, wherein the resultant ground inorganic particulate material is added to:

- a sealant or mastic, and/or

- a composition which is subsequently processed to obtain a sealant or mastic.

97. (New) The method according to claim 80, wherein the resultant ground inorganic particulate material is added to:

- a ceramic, and/or

- a composition which is subsequently processed to obtain a ceramic.

98. (New) A paper or paper pulp, prepared by a method according to claim 92.

99. (New) A polymer or rubber, prepared by a method according to claim 93.

100. (New) A paint, prepared by a method according to claim 95.

101. (New) A sealant or mastic, prepared by a method according to claim 96.

102. (New) A ceramic, prepared by a method according to claim 97.

103. (New) An aqueous suspension of at least one ground inorganic particulate material comprising a sub-effective amount of at least one dispersant for the at least one inorganic particulate material, prepared by a method of grinding at least one inorganic particulate material in an aqueous suspension, wherein said aqueous suspension comprises a sub-effective amount of at least one dispersant for the at least one inorganic particulate material, and wherein said aqueous suspension comprises the inorganic particulate material at a solids level up to about 50% by weight, based on the total weight of the suspension.

104. (New) A method of preparing an aqueous suspension of an inorganic particulate material, said method comprising:

grinding an inorganic particulate material in an aqueous suspension, said aqueous suspension comprising a sub-effective amount of at least one dispersant for the inorganic particulate material; and

adding, after grinding, at least one dispersant to said aqueous suspension in a dispersant-effective amount for the inorganic particulate material.

105. (New) The method of claim 104, wherein the sub-effective amount of the at least one dispersant is present in the aqueous suspension in an amount up to 0.19% by weight, based on the dry weight of the inorganic particulate material.

106. (New) The method of claim 104, wherein the at least one dispersant added to said aqueous suspension in a dispersant-effective amount is added to the aqueous

suspension in an amount of at least about 0.3% by weight, based on the dry weight of the inorganic particulate material.

107. (New) The method of claim 104, wherein the aqueous suspension comprising the sub-effective amount of at least one dispersant for the grinding of the inorganic particulate material comprises the inorganic particulate material at a solids level up to about 50% by weight, based on the total weight of the suspension.

108. (New) The method according to claim 107, further comprising adjusting the solids level of the aqueous suspension after grinding to provide an aqueous suspension comprising the inorganic particulate material at a solids level above about 50% by weight, based on the total weight of the suspension.

109. (New) The method according to claim 108, wherein the adjusting of the solids level of the aqueous suspension after grinding comprises dewatering the aqueous suspension.